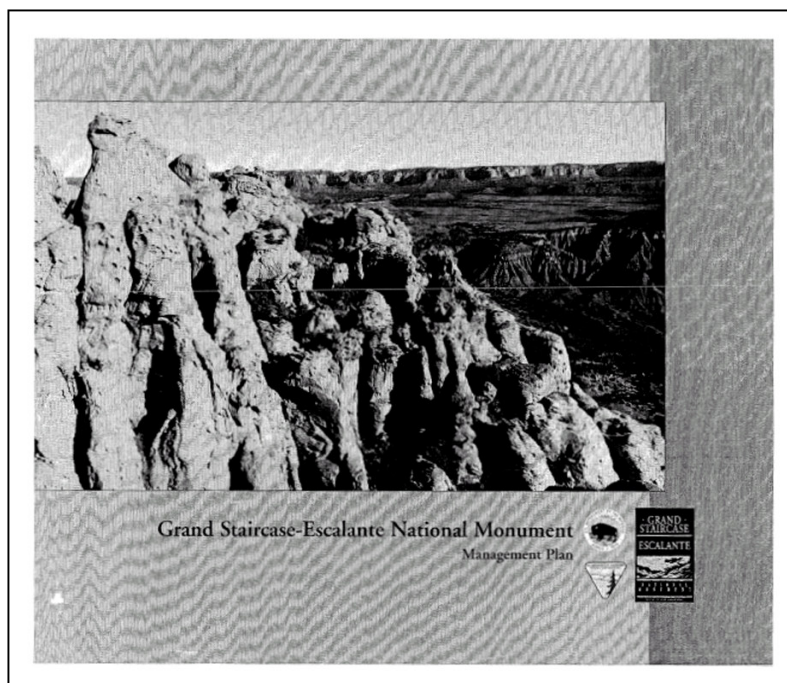
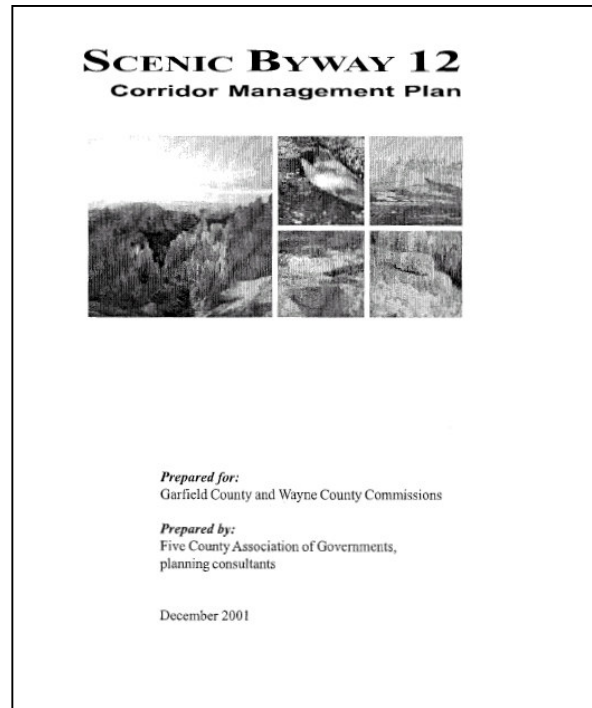
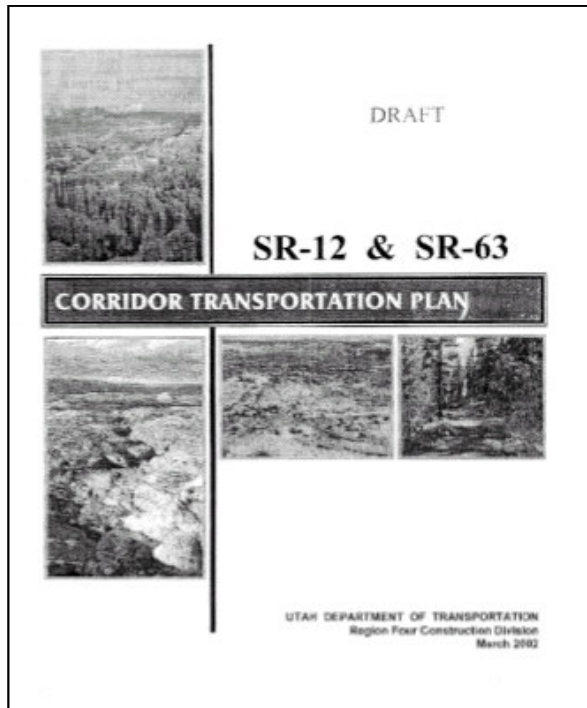


# SR-12 Environmental Assessment

## ESCALANTE TO BOULDER

# Summary of Previous Documents



## Previous Studies

The *SR-12 & SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan* conducted by UDOT, the *Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan* prepared by the Five County Association of Governments, and the *Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Plan* conducted by the BLM, are available in full on the project web site. For further information, please visit: [www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12](http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12).

## SR-12 Public Involvement Summary

SR-12 has been the subject of several studies over the years. The most recent studies include the *SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan* conducted by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) in 2000, and the *Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* conducted by Wayne and Garfield Counties in 2001. These studies incorporated public involvement efforts that included the surrounding communities, tourists, government agencies, and all other interested parties. The following is a summary of the public involvement activities that took place during these studies.

The “*SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan*,” conducted by UDOT in 2001, encompassed the entire SR-12 and SR-63 corridors. This study included the roadway and related geographic areas along SR-12. The UDOT study focused on safety hazards along the entire 128-mile corridor. From that study, it has been determined that the 28-mile section between Escalante and Boulder needs further assessment.

The “*Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan*” was conducted by the Five County Association of Governments on behalf of Wayne and Garfield Counties in 2001. The purpose of this study was to identify the special qualities of the byway corridor and address how to sustain the character of Scenic Byway12 by utilizing public input.

Written and verbal comments were collected and documented from open houses and public meetings during both studies. Stakeholders identified themselves as residents, ranchers, business owners, members of organizations such as the Boulder Planning Commission, Utah State Parks, and public officials such as the City Mayor, and County Sheriff. Their comments generally referred to both specific suggestions for safety improvements along the roadway and preserving the rural character of the corridor. A few specific safety suggestions included additional turnouts, larger signs, slower speed limits near Boulder, and turn lanes for entrances to visitor centers and parks.

The public involvement history for the “*SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan*” is summarized in the following table.

### **Public Involvement Activities for the “SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan” June 2000 – October 2001**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>
June 6, 2000	N.A.	Letter sent to public agencies and local governments seeking participation in the SR-12 planning process.
July 5, 2000	N.A.	Letter sent to participating public entities informing of August planning meeting.
Aug. 2, 2000	Escalante Town Hall	Public agencies met to plan for the SR-12 Corridor Transportation Study. Represented were GSENM, Capitol Reef NP, Bryce Canyon NP, Town of Boulder, Town of Escalante, Garfield County Travel Council, Dixie Nat'l . Forest, Utah Travel Council, Boulder Planning Commission, UDOT, Utah Parks and Recreation, FHWA,

		Wayne County Travel Council, and Garfield County.
Oct. 11, 2000	USFS Panguitch	Planning for public open house meetings.
Oct. 25, 2000	UDOT Richfield	GSENM/UDOT meeting to outline goals for a MOU to work together on the SR-12 Corridor. Planned for field review on November 16, 2000.
Nov. 2, 2000	Escalante Town Hall	Public Open House seeking input from all public and private stakeholders.
Nov. 2, 2000	Cannonville Town Hall	Public Open House seeking input from all public and private stakeholders.
Nov. 9, 2000	Boulder Town Hall	Public Open House seeking input from all public and private stakeholders.
Nov. 9, 2000	Bicknell Town Hall	Public Open House seeking input from all public and private stakeholders GSENM/UDOT field review of issues along SR-12..
Nov. 15, 2000	GSENM: Henrieville to Boulder	Work Group Meeting for field review of corridor from the Junction of SR-12 and SR-89 to the Junction of SR-12 and SR-63.
Jan. 24, 2001	Jct. SR 12/89 to SR 63	Originally planned for an SR-12 Communication and Interpretive Plan meeting. Changed to an informational meeting about obtaining National Scenic Byway or All American Highway status for SR-12. The USFS took the lead role in organizing the meeting.
Feb. 27, 2001	Ruby's Inn	Work Group Meeting for field review of corridor from Boulder to Torrey.
April 26, 2001	Boulder to Torrey	Work Group Meeting for field review of corridor through GSENM.
June 27, 2001	Jct. SR 12/89 to Boulder	Work Group Meeting for field review of corridor through GSENM.
Oct. 9, 2001	Bryce Canyon	Work Group Meeting for field review of SR-12 and SR-63 corridors in the vicinity of Bryce Canyon National Park.
Oct. 9, 2001	Cannonville	Kodachrome State Park/UDOT meeting to discuss maintenance difficulties of the road to Kodachrome Park, and the possibilities of making the road a state road.

During the public meetings held by the UDOT, public comments were gathered and documented. Comments were received verbally, though the mail, by email, and/or by notes on maps provided at the meetings. The following tables include a summary of the public comments gathered during this study.

**Comments Recorded on Maps at Public Open Houses held  
on November 2, 2000 and November 9, 2000  
“Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan”**

***Section 4: Escalante (east limits) to Boulder (west limits) (RP 60.58-83.82)***

RP 60.7	We would like neon green-yellow signs for the two schools (elementary and high school). Also, there should be crosswalks painted from the high school to the service station.
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RP 60-63	Major deer crossing area.
RP 60-80	Cattle driveway from Boulder to Escalante.
RP 61	Please put a distance sign below the speed limit sign. Also, there is an historic marker (a rock with a bronze plaque) for the Boulder Mail Trail located outside the southeast corner of the cemetery.
RP 62	Need a cattle guard here . . . east of Escalante.
RP 60-63	Utah Forest Products has large truck traffic making 50-100 trips per week. This traffic is seasonal and is based on market demand.
RP 64.5	Fencing and cattle guard are needed here.
RP 68	Old sheep pens (south of road), cream cellar (north of road), and old road to Boulder (parallel to Hwy 12, north of road) between RP 68 and 73 (just west of Boynton Lookout) these are possible interpretive sites.
RP 73	Keep CCC rock work intact just west of Boynton Lookout. The CCC work on Hwy 12 is a tremendous opportunity for historic and other interpretation.
RP 74	Outside of curve (from Boynton Lookout going down to the Escalante River) needs barriers that blend in with the natural red rocks. Do not make it a parking or overlook area to respect the privacy of land owners are Calf Creek Ranch.
RP 74	Fence right-of-way south of gate for stock driveway. Also, there needs to be a cattle guard on the approach to Calf Creek Ranch (near Escalante River).
RP 74.5	Keep CCC rock work intact.
RP 74.3-75.5	This stretch of road is a dump for RV's. We often smell sewage. We recommend a "No Dumping" sign with a fine.
RP 74.3-83.8	This section of road needs lots of passing lanes with signage.
RP 76.5	Need "Ice" signs in both directions. The road is in the shade of huge rocks and it gets really icy.
RP 77-78	This area is where the "camel backs" are. It needs a sign to inform travelers of corkscrew turn. (There may be a sign there now.)
RP 79	Move the Hogsback scenic overlook to the saddle ¼ mile to the south.
RP 79.5	Present location for Hogsback overlook is a safety hazard.
RP 80	The newly asphalted pull-outs on the Hogsback are very unsightly. The Hogsback is such an exceptionally scenic route and needs to be treated with some sensitive design, etc. Suggest a very low-key approach, but it has to be effective. Also, the old cedar road side posts along here are unique.

#### ***Section 5: Boulder (west INCL) to RP 88***

RP 83	Need slower speed signs approaching Boulder.
RP 85.5	Drainage ditch alongside slickrock was sprayed/stabilized with tar, but the tar got sprayed along the base of the rock. This is unnecessary and spoils the scenic quality.
RP 86	There is a blind corner @ the store's west exit. West-bound traffic needs to know that there will be traffic exiting onto Highway 12. East-bound traffic could be slowed down after coming off the dump road and coming into town.
RP 86.9	The Burr Trail junction needs coordination of signage, including local business "logo sign" facility. (The Boulder Planning Commission has been pushing this – and getting no where for two years.) Also, the loose gravel was never cleared away after chip sealing. It is a potential accident zone.

RP 87.5	There needs to be a turn lane into Anasazi State Park.
RP 88	Need slower speed signs approaching Boulder.

The following is a list of comments received from various community members regarding **Section 4: Escalante (east limits) to Boulder (west limits) (RP 60.58 – 83.82)**:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a safe and practical means for bicyclists along Hwy 12; possibly even a separate shoulder for them, maybe following the old road between Escalante and Boulder.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ID animal crossing areas (deer/elk) around mile marker 62-63.</li> <li>• Better side road connections to SR-12, i.e. sawmill (MP 63) and Escalante Airport (MP 62).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along Highway 12 from Escalante to Boulder, more turnouts need to be made. Shoulders are needed for emergency parking as well as turnouts for the road crew to park overnight while maintaining the road.</li> <li>• Because some areas of the Boulder Road between Escalante and Boulder are narrow, sandstone ledges need to be blasted to allow more shoulder on the roads and better vision. This would help in emergencies, as well as make a place to scrape the snow.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I called Wade Barney to report vandalism to scenic Hwy 12 sign at the overlook by MP 70.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalante soil and climate conditions merit agriculture production. We could grow anything if we had the water.</li> <li>• At least three books have been published about our area: “Hole in the Rock” by Miller, “Escalante Story” by Nethella Griffin, and “They Told Them to Come to Escalante” by Jerry Roundy.</li> <li>• Escalante began as a livestock producing town – sheep, cattle, and horses. That endeavor is struggling with the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Government offices, the telephone office, Steed’s Sawmill, and Turnabout Ranch are the main sources of revenue, and livestock, fishing, hunting, and tourism are picking up some of the slack.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deer migrate across SR-12 between the Escalante Airport access road and a cattle guard. Several deer are hit there every year. Could UDOT put a deer underpass and fencing there to prevent accidents?</li> <li>• Owner of the airport access road in Escalante is trying to migrate south. He should not be allowed to do that.</li> </ul>

The public involvement history for the “*Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan*” included presentations given to five communities surrounding Scenic Byway 12, articles published, public service announcements aired on local radio, public notices posted throughout the byway communities, and a Scenic Byway 12 Newsletter mailed to stakeholders. As a result of the public involvement efforts, it was determined that the Scenic Byway 12 Committee had substantial community support to apply for “All-American Road” status through the Federal Highway Administration.

## SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan

### Technical Design Summary

The SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan was compiled by UDOT Region 4 in 2002 in an effort to provide information to aid in making transportation-related decisions in this area. The corridor identified in the plan includes the entire lengths of SR-12 and SR-63. However, the Corridor Transportation Plan includes important technical data on the portion of SR-12 under investigation as part of this environmental study, about 24 miles from Escalante to Boulder.

TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle Mix: 80% passenger cars, 1% trucks, 18% RV's, and less than 1% buses.</li> <li>• AADT: 1,200 in the year 2000</li> <li>• Level of Service (LOS) in the year 2000: From SE Escalante to Hole-in-the-Rock Road – B; From Hole-in-the-Rock Road to W Boulder – C</li> <li>• LOS in the year 2016: From SE Escalante to Hole-in-the-Rock Road – C; From Hole-in-the Rock Road to W Boulder – D</li> <li>• Average growth rate: 3.4%</li> </ul>
SAFETY DATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The portion of SR-12 within the study area limits is divided into 2 sections, from SE Escalante to Hole-in-the-Rock Road and from Hole-in-the-Rock Road to W Boulder.</li> <li>• Section 1 is 4.33 miles in length with 1.31 accidents per million vehicle-miles as compared with the statewide average of 2.29. The average accident severity for this section is 1.50 as compared to a statewide average of 1.67.</li> <li>• Section 2, from Hole-in-the-Rock Road to W Boulder, is 18.95 miles in length. 0.60 accidents per million vehicle-miles are reported, with the statewide average at 2.29. The average severity of these accidents is 1.91 as compared to a statewide average of 1.67.</li> </ul>
GEOMETRIC DATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan classifies this portion of SR-12 as a “rural other principal arterial.”</li> <li>• Geometric data for SR-12 within the study area limits is provided as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Substandard shoulder widths: From SE Escalante to Hole-in-the-Rock Road – 1' ; From Hole-in-the-Rock Road to W Boulder – 2/3' to 4.5'.</li> <li>○ Areas with grades greater than 8%: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RP 65.5-66 – West of “Head of the Rocks”</li> <li>RP 69.5-69.8 – West of “Head of the Rocks”</li> <li>RP 70.2-74.2 – Below “Head of the Rocks”</li> <li>RP 75.6-77.9 – North of Calf Creek</li> <li>RP 78.3-78.9 – South of the “Hogsback”</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Areas with deficient clear zone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RP 61.8-62 – Washes near the road</li> <li>RP 62.2-63 – Washes near the road</li> <li>RP 68-72 – From Head of the Rocks north</li> <li>RP 73.5 – Cut near Boynton Lookout</li> <li>RP 73.8-74 – Boynton Lookout to Escalante River</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Substandard Horizontal Curves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RP 70-80 – Head of the Rocks to south end of the Hogsback</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
STRUCTURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two structures are identified within the study area limits.</li> <li>• Structure C784 over the Escalante River is located at RP 74.440. This is a steel beam structure built in 1994 with a sufficiency rating of 84.3, good condition.</li> <li>• Structure V1418 over Calf Creek is located at RP 75.100 and was built in 1964. This has a sufficiency rating of 58.0, deteriorated. The plan recommends that this box culvert be replaced and widened.</li> </ul>
CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan identifies construction solutions for SR-12 and SR-63 organized into 1-5 year, 5-10 year, and 10-20 year implementation listed by milepost.</li> <li>• Within the project study limits, between RP 70 and 80, the plan recommends road widening, flattening of vertical curves, realignment at sharp turns, and correction of the insufficient asphalt sections of 2”-5” in the 1-5 year implementation category. These improvements are given a priority of “Very High,” claiming that the deficiencies make the area a high hazard with slow traffic flow. However, the plan concedes that design exceptions will be required because flat</li> </ul>

CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS	<p>shoulders along this section will be impractical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan also suggests constructing turnouts at various locations within the project limits within 1-5 years. These turnouts are also given a “very high” priority because they would improve traffic flow by providing a place for slow traffic to pull completely out of the roadway.</li> <li>• No construction solutions are identified for the portion of SR-12 within the study area in the 5-10 year category.</li> <li>• Within the 10-20 year implementation category, the plan recommends widening the shoulders from 1’ to 6’ from Escalante to Head of the Rocks, RP 60.2 to 70. These improvements are given a moderately high priority due to the fact that in some areas there is no paved shoulder beyond the lane line.</li> </ul>
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## SR-12 Summary of Existing Environmental Information

SR-12 and the surrounding areas have been the subject of several studies over the years. The most recent of these studies include: the *SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan* conducted by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) in 2000; the *Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan* prepared for the Garfield County and Wayne County Commissions in 2001 and; the *Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument Management Plan* prepared by the Bureau of Land Management in 1999 .

These three studies included the identification of resources, potential management strategies, and concerns related to the natural environment along the SR-12 Corridor. The following table is a depiction of the environmental issues identified and discussed along the sections of SR-12 from Escalante to Boulder.

Natural Resource	Description
FISH AND WILDLIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are at least five distinct ecosystems, a variety of flora and fauna within the entire SR-12 corridor. In addition to beaver and coyote, the corridor includes habitat for several game species including blue and sage grouse, antelope, elk, bear and mule deer, among other mammals and birds.</li> <li>• 362 species of vertebrate animals and 1,112 species on invertebrates have been identified within the Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM) boundaries, through which SR-12 passes.</li> <li>• Various agencies have identified the following species as having special management status in the general area of the SR-12 corridor: Colorado pikeminnow, Utah Prairie Dog, Western Patch-Nosed Snake, Plateau Striped Whiptail, Roundtail Chub, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Mexican spotted owl, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, California Condor, and the Kanab Ambersnail.</li> <li>• Wildlife, including neo-tropical birds, concentrate around the riparian corridors and although these represent only a small portion of the corridor, they are some of the most productive, ecologically valuable, and utilized areas.</li> <li>• Biological soils consisting of lichens, mosses, and algae typically bound in a matrix of clay, silt, and sand are common.</li> <li>• A November 2001 inventory of wetlands along SR-12 identified one wetland area in the vicinity of the Escalante River Bridge.</li> <li>• Invasive species have been identified in the vicinity of the Escalante River.</li> <li>• The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or other agencies have previously identified the following as “Special Plant Species” in the vicinity of the SR-12 corridor: Jones’ Cycladenia, Kodachrome Bladderpod, Ute Ladies’-tresses, and the Rabbit Valley Gilia.</li> <li>• A GSENM management objective is to maintain a high degree of native plant diversity.</li> <li>• A diverse range of restoration methods have been considered to restore and promote a natural range of native plants in the GSENM, including mechanical, machinery, chemical, biological, and management-ignited fires.</li> </ul>
WATER RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following river sections, located within the SR-12 project corridor, have been classified by the State of Utah as having water quality conditions which need improvement: (1) Escalante River (from Lake Powell to Calf Creek – total phosphorus and sediment); (2) Escalante River (from confluence of Calf Creek to headwaters – sediment); (3) Calf Creek (confluence with Escalante River to headwaters – temperature, total dissolved solids, and sediment).</li> <li>• Approximately 252 miles of river located within the GSENM are suitable for</li> </ul>



	<p>designation as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential “Wild River” sections are not in the immediate vicinity of SR-12; however, Calf Creek and the Escalante River near SR-12 are protected for potential designation as “Scenic Rivers.”</li> </ul>
LAND USE, VISUAL VALUES, AND MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are designated within the project corridor.</li> <li>• Special Recreation Management Areas have been identified in the Escalante Canyons and along the Highway 12 corridor.</li> <li>• Visual Resource Management (VRM) assets have been identified for preservation along the corridor, under guidelines established within the GSENM plan.</li> <li>• Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) have been identified along and within much of the project corridor.</li> <li>• Geologic hazards are present in the GSENM, but not yet been inventoried.</li> <li>• A Scenic SR-12 Byway Management group identified the following as important factors in the project corridor: quality of life, economic vitality, protection, safety, and sense of place.</li> </ul>
LAND USE, VISUAL VALUES, AND MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for maintaining a pristine natural environment along the corridor have been developed by various groups, and include: (1) encouraging communities to adopt ordinances through planning and zoning that ensure protection of night-time skies; (2) developing sites and interpretive materials that highlight the natural resources along the corridor; and (3) coordination of long-range planning among all agencies.</li> <li>• Scenic Byway 12 is considered the “Crown Jewel” of southern Utah. This area has some of the most beautiful landscape found within the state. There are 20 known scenic resources within the corridor and another 28 scenic resources within the Area of Influence.</li> <li>• There is no unique farmland along SR-12; however, prime and statewide farmland soils have been found in various locations. Best management practices for erosion and sediment control must be followed for any construction project.</li> </ul>
CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete inventories have not yet been completed for the project corridor, but valuable and rare artifacts, history, and resources are common in this area.</li> </ul>